

# Trends In Amplification

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## From the Editor

One of the things I find most interesting, and most challenging, about working with hearing aids is the speed at which the associated technology moves. Even when we view a fairly narrow time window, the pace of hearing aid progress is nearly staggering. In the past 10 years we have seen commercial digital hearing aids move from non-existence to representing more than 30% of the hearing aids sold. As quickly as digital hearing aids have advanced we have seen even faster changes in other areas. Some of these areas have been around for much longer though perhaps leading to the belief that they are well understood. One such area is compression amplification. In the last five years the percentage of hearing aids dispensed with compression has risen from 50% to approximately 80%. Over the same time period we have seen the increased use of a few non-linear prescriptive formulas, such as DSL [i/o], and the introduction of several others, including NAL-NL1. With the high usage of compression in hearing aids, the importance of keeping up with advances in compression represents a somewhat daunting, but extremely important, task. Fortunately, in this month's issue of *Trends in Amplification* we have Pamela E. Souza, PhD, to explain

many of the issues we must consider when selecting and fitting compression amplification.

Dr. Souza is well known for her work in the area of hearing aids and speech recognition. Her recent research focuses on the effect of new amplification strategies on speech recognition and quality, on developing candidacy guidelines for use of these hearing aids, and on the effects of age on use of temporal cues in amplified speech. She has written multiple articles on these topics and has presented her work both nationally and internationally. While some audiologists operate with only a superficial understanding of compression, Dr. Souza has endeavored to examine its effects starting at the level of the phoneme. Even with all the time she devotes to her research, Dr. Souza still finds time to perform other tasks such as serving as Ear and Hearing's current section editor for amplification. In addition, her teaching excellence has been recognized with her naming as a Huckabay Teaching Fellowship Mentor (2000–2001).

Dr. Souza is currently an associate professor of Speech & Hearing Sciences at

the University of Washington, where she has been on faculty since 1996. She joined the faculty after completing her doctorate at Syracuse University where she examined the effect of compression hearing aids on speech audibility and temporal cues. Prior to her doctoral studies she completed master's work at Syracuse University and undergraduate work at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst (magna cum laude). In addition to her research background, she has

worked as a clinical audiologist for several medical facilities. We feel that given the mixture of clinical and research interest in compression, Dr. Souza was an ideal candidate to provide our readers with a comprehensive compression update.

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Editor-in-Chief